

CONFIDENTIAL.]

[No. 1 of 1903.

REPORT (PART II)

ON

NATIVE-OWNED ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS IN BENGAL

FOR THE

Week ending Saturday, 3rd January 1903.

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I.—FOREIGN POLITICS.

1. The *Indian Mirror* is sorry that Great Britain should have placed itself in the situation of a bully in its questionable alliance with Germany for the purpose of coercing the Venezuelan Republic. It would be a good thing if Great Britain could get out of the unprofitable bog with dignity or even decency. The Powers, despite their great names and greater resources, had to scramble out of China. We may probably witness a similar spectacle in the matter of Venezuela. The scrambling out in the latter instance is already in sight.

2. The *Bengalee* says that as long as the late Amir occupied the throne of Afghanistan, Russia could only occasionally make a military display in the neighbourhood of Afghanistan and India, but with the new Amir she has attempted to win him to her cause and to arrive at an understanding. The journal holds, however, that a Russian invasion of India is a very different thing from a mere Russian menace in which she has indulged for half a century. Russia may threaten this, that or the other thing, but they are empty threats which no sane man would be disposed to take seriously.

INDIAN MIRROR.
25th Dec. 1902.

BENGALEE.
25th Dec. 1902.

II.—HOME ADMINISTRATION.

(a)—Police.

3. The *Bengalee* agrees with Babu Ashutosh Biswas, one of the witnesses before the Police Commission, that the Indian element should predominate in the superior grades of the Indian Police. It would reverse the order of the Public Service Commission, and say that that element should predominate, but that Europeans ought not to be excluded but given a reasonable proportion of appointments, where, for instance, the great bulk of the population consists of Europeans.

BENGALEE,
24th Dec. 1902.

4. The *Bengalee* points to the fact that while in Bengal a number of Indian Police Officers have risen to the grade of District Superintendent with most satisfactory results, in the United Provinces only a solitary Muhammadan Inspector has up to this time been elevated to that rank. It expresses the opinion that it was time the provincial authorities took a broader view of this matter.

BENGALEE,
25th Dec. 1902.

5. Reverting to the proportion of Indians in the Superior Police Service in Bengal, which it finds has been fixed at one-sixth of the entire number of Assistant and District Superintendents—an unreasonable, unjust and unfair proportion—the *Bengalee* complains of the manner in which Government has set about to give effect to its own decision in practice. According to this proportion, there ought to be fourteen Indian officers, whereas there are only six, the last of whom was appointed in May 1900, since which date no less than eight European officers have been appointed. Bad, therefore, as are the rules which make provision for two Indians being appointed every three years, even these rules are neither strictly nor faithfully carried out in practice. The journal hopes that with the returning sense of the fitness of things and goodwill towards the people, the rulers will see their way to alter the existing order of things and place it upon a just and reasonable basis.

BENGALEE,
28th Dec. 1902.

(b)—Working of the Courts.

6. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* complains of the prejudice shown by Mr. Fisher, District and Sessions Judge, Dinajpur, against the members of the legal profession and to his attempts to disbar Babu M. N. Banerji, Government Pleader of Darjeeling, and to his more recent and unsuccessful recommendation to the High Court to suspend Babu Tara Prasad Roy, a Mukhtear of Dinajpur. It says:—

AMRITA BAZAR
PATRIKA,
25th Dec. 1902.

"Mr. Fisher is a young man, who has yet to learn much. We think he should have a thorough training before he is entrusted with the responsible

duties of a District and Sessions Judge. Indeed, he should revert to his original post of Joint-Magistrate. He has, we are told, rendered himself very unpopular, and his official conduct should attract the notice of the Government."

(h)—General.

AMRITA BAZAR
PATRIKA,
24th & 27th Dec. 1902

7. With reference to the numerous complaints against the *zulum* that is being practised in connection with the raising of funds for local Coronation celebrations, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* advises those who do not wish to pay, not to do so. Those who are oppressed after this, are requested to send their cases to the *Patrika* with a view to that journal submitting them to His Excellency the Viceroy.

Every contribution, it repeats in its issue of the 27th, should be absolutely voluntary, and no one has anything to fear from the local authorities if he does not see his way to pay towards the fund.

AMRITA BAZAR
PATRIKA,
24th Dec. 1902.

8. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* is quite prepared to agree with what His Excellency the Viceroy remarked at the Woodburn Memorial meeting, that the life of the English official in India is hard, but it thinks that much of this hardship could be obviated if they consented to part with some of their power and admit the native of the soil to a share in the work of administration. This, however, they will never do. They want more power, although what they have got is crushing them.

AMRITA BAZAR
PATRIKA,
24th Dec. 1902.

Why English officials in India are unhappy.
The appointment of the Hon'ble Mr. Fraser as Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.

it affords us great pleasure that he has been persuaded to accept it. A few months ago, when it was rumoured that Mr. Fraser was likely to be appointed as the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, we were shocked to find that some Indian papers, in the hands of irresponsible men, were abusing him in the foulest manner possible. We had to stop this by an article, and we see that we have no necessity of changing a word of what we then said about Mr. Fraser and his detractors.

INDIAN MIRROR.
25th Dec. 1902.

9. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* writes as follows:—
Of course we are very glad that the Hon'ble Mr. Fraser has been appointed as our ruler. We are assured that he did not bid for the post. Anyhow,

Ibid.

10. The *Indian Mirror* congratulates Mr. Fraser on his appointment and says that he will be welcome. His comparative youth is at least one advantage in his favour.

Meanwhile, it hopes Mr. Bourdillon will avail himself of his exceptional opportunity of doing good and earning affection.

BENGALEE.
25th Dec. 1902.

11. The *Bengalee* finds itself unable to indulge in any enthusiasm over the appointment of Mr. Fraser as Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. When no obstacle stood in Lord Curzon's way to hinder him from gratifying the popular desire, and of appointing Sir Henry Cotton to Belvedere, he permitted Sir John Woodburn to linger on at his post, and the announcement of the appointment of Mr. Fraser was kept back until two days after the retirement of Sir Henry Cotton had been formally notified. Is this, asks the journal, one of Lord Curzon's methods of scheming out of a difficulty? Altogether the Viceroy's policy in this matter leaves very little to be said for it on the ground of straightforwardness or public morality.

Mr. Bourdillon might have been confirmed in his appointment, as Sir James LaTouche has been in the United Provinces. His confirmation would have met with universal approbation, while Mr. Fraser's appointment has evoked sentiments of exactly the opposite description. Bengal does not know him, and is profoundly ignorant both of his personality and of his qualifications to rule her. His attitude as President of the Police Commission is not inspiring public confidence, for it reveals him as the possessor of the stereotyped narrow-minded official opinions which betoken a reactionary and unsympathetic administration. Taking him at his best, all available indications go to show that he is just nothing more or less than one of those commonplace safe men who is not likely to throw the dazzling centrepiece into the shade by the exhibition of any embarrassing brilliance.

The *Bengalee* concludes by commiserating with Mr. Bourdillon, who has been permitted the expensive honour of representing Bengal at the Delhi Darbar, while Mr. Fraser is to walk in and instal himself when the bills have all been paid and the accounts finally adjusted.

12. The reference to India in the speech from the Throne has come upon the *Bengalee* as a most agreeable surprise, and notwithstanding its inability to agree with everything it contained, the journal hopes that the practice of referring to India in the Royal speech thus inaugurated will never be departed from during the present reign.

13. The *Indian Mirror* holds that Government by entertainment is a demeaning and demoralising mode of administering the affairs of an Empire:—

"Europeans get dinners, 'Natives' get mock titles. But the middle and poor classes get all the kicks. They get neither the dinners, nor the titles, nor the *tamashas*. We are glad that the *Spectator* has cleared the air in the matter, and still more glad that a European newspaper in India (*Capital*) has courageously fired the first shot at this perennial humbug."

14. The *Bengalee* holds that the causes of the poverty of this country lie mainly in the stifling of its indigenous industries by foreign competition and to the insane

desire of the Indians to enter in a body the so-called learned professions. The Indians have neither the strength to draw back and retrace their steps nor the energy to grapple with their difficulties and try to overcome them. And so things are allowed to drift on from bad to worse, while "we are happy in the thought that nothing serious will happen in our time, though after us will come the universal deluge."

15. Alluding to the personal failures and losses in the industrial development of India, retailed by the Hon'ble Mr. Pherozeshah Mehta, at the opening of the

Industrial Exhibition at Ahmedabad, the *Indian Mirror* mentions those which the enterprising people of Bengal have gone through:—

"We had a provincial railway—that failed. We had glass manufacture and match manufacture industries—which came to grief. As in the cases cited by Mr. Mehta, these failures were due to 'ignorance' on the part of the promoters. Probably, also, the working capital was not sufficiently large. And probably, also, in Bengal at least, there lurked in not a few so-called patriotic industrial concerns an element of greed or dishonesty."

"But with the lead taken by the Indian National Congress, the industrial problem in India becomes more practical and clearer of solution. That is the greatest encouragement and the initial originating hope. The co-operation of Indian Chiefs and aristocracy makes yet another hopeful factor for success. The semi-silent, the semi-active encouragement by the official classes is also to the fore. So that the industrial prosperity of India cannot after all be so very far off."

16. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* refers to the bestowal of titles, &c., at the Delhi Assemblage of 1877 as the only result of that function, and wonders whether the people are to be treated in the same way by Lord Curzon. If they were children then, pleased with titles of honour, they are grown up men to-day, and such toys as stars and medals will not amuse them any longer. Yet, it is doubtful whether any better treatment is in store for them.

17. The *Indian Mirror* refers to the complaints of highhandness in the collection of funds for local Coronation festivities in Bengal, and hopes that these instances of oppression will catch Lord Curzon's eye. It is reported that the Bank deposits are being examined, and those who have accounts in Banks are being served with letters to contribute. What right the officials have to demand, or the Bank managers to reveal, money secrets is more than the *Mirror* can understand. If these allegations are true, they make up, in the journal's opinion, an unparalleled scandal even in the annals of officialdom.

18. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* reverts to the necessity of imparting a religious character to the ceremony of the Coronation, as was the case in London. It would

BENGALEE,
25th Dec. 1902.

INDIAN MIRROR,
26th Dec. 1902.

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AMRITA BAZAR
PATRIKA,
27th Dec. 1902.

INDIAN MIRROR,
28th Dec. 1902.

AMRITA BAZAR
PATRIKA,
29th Dec. 1902.

be sorry to see it reduced to an ungodly affair, as it has a horror of ungodly pageants, for they bring misfortune.

AMRITA BASAR
PATRIKA,
29th Dec. 1902.

19. The same paper compares the condition of the Indians at the time of the Delhi Assemblage of 1877 with their present condition, and finds that, whereas 25 years ago, they rejoiced at the elective municipal franchise of Calcutta, they are now in the grip of repressive measures, such as the following, which have taken the manliness out of them:—

- (1) The subordination of the High Court to the Executive Government.
- (2) The disarmament of the nation.
- (3) The restriction of the freedom of speech by Sedition Acts.
- (4) Interference with our social customs by the Age of Consent Act.
- (5) The deposition of several Indian Princes and the practical annexation of their States.

In these circumstances, it is not possible, the writer holds, for the people to rejoice on the occasion of the Coronation of their Emperor. Again, it is not the Indians who are crowning their Emperor. Next, the real Emperor of India is not Edward VII, but Lord George Hamilton. The Indians would be glad to find themselves in the position they occupied a quarter of a century ago.

IV.—NATIVE STATES.

BENGALEE,
26th Dec. 1902.

20. The *Bengalee* is deliberately of opinion that no cause or ground has been made public to justify the particular mode of settlement which leaves the Nizam a mere shadow of sovereignty over the Berars, and which is tantamount to the annexation of the richest districts in the Nizam's dominions.

OFFICE OF THE INSPR.-GENERAL
OF POLICE, L. P.,
WRITERS' BUILDINGS,
The 3rd January 1903.

H. B. ST. LEGER,
Ass't. to the Insp'r.-General of Police, L. P.